

## GRADUATE STUDENT NEWSLETTER

August 31, 1999

**ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER**

This is the seventh edition of the newsletter established in the fall of 1995, which is meant to serve as a way of spreading information and encouraging interaction among graduate students, in all three of our programs (M.A. History and Philosophy of Religion, M.A. Judaic Studies, and Ph.D. Religion), and between graduate students and faculty members in the Department of Religion. This issue of the newsletter is edited by Leslie Orr, and is a relatively short version, with rather unsystematically collected news and announcements. If you would like to have more and different kinds of information, or to participate in putting together the next newsletter, please get in touch with Leslie. Information about student and faculty activities that was published in earlier issues of the newsletter (the last newsletter appeared in the spring of 1999) is not repeated here. (You can ask Leslie for back issues, if you're interested, or find them at the Department's web site: [artsci-ccwin.concordia.ca/religion/reli.html](http://artsci-ccwin.concordia.ca/religion/reli.html)). This newsletter is being sent out by e-mail for the first time. If you are receiving this newsletter by snail-mail and would prefer to get an electronic version (or vice versa), please inform Tina Montandon, the Graduate Program Assistant.

**FELLOWSHIPS**

For information about fellowships, and other opportunities, keep your eye on the bulletin boards in the department. You should also check Concordia's on-line catalogue of Graduate Awards: [http://www-gradstudies.concordia.ca/sgs\\_www/publications.html](http://www-gradstudies.concordia.ca/sgs_www/publications.html). If you don't have access to this via the internet, you can consult the hard copy at the Graduate Awards office, in the School of Graduate Studies, at 2135 Mackay 2nd floor (848-3801, email [awardsgs@vax2.concordia.ca](mailto:awardsgs@vax2.concordia.ca).)

GRADUATE FELLOWSHIP INFORMATION SESSIONS are being held this fall according to the following schedule:

Tuesday, September 7th	11:30 - 13:00	H 762
Thursday, September 9th	12:30 - 14:00	H 769
Monday, September 13th	10:30 - 12:00	H 762
Wednesday, September 15th	13:30 - 15:00	H 769
Friday, September 17th	11:30 - 13:00	H 762

The two major external sources of funding for graduate studies are the Quebec government's FCAR fellowships (for M.A. and Ph.D. students), and the federal government's SSHRC fellowships (for Ph.D. students). There are many other fellowships available as well, with

application deadlines this fall, including awards offered by the Association for Canadian Studies and the Canadian Federation of University Women. You are strongly urged to consult with your professors about what opportunities are available, and to ask for guidance in making your applications. Information about the FCAR and SSHRC competitions follows:

#### FONDS FCAR 2000/2001 SCHOLARSHIP COMPETITIONS

Applications and guidelines for all FCAR competitions are available on their website at <http://www.fcar.qc.ca>. The deadline date for applications is October 7th. Applicants must be Canadian citizens or Permanent Residents of Canada and residing in Quebec for at least one year and be considered as residents of Quebec according to RAMQ and the Quebec Income Tax Act.

Applications must be completed via the web and transmitted to FCAR via the web. You may save your information as you are filling in the form, print it and modify it but once you push the "transmit key" the application is gone and you can no longer make any modifications. The application must be transmitted to them by October 7th. Do not wait until the last minute to transmit your form, you may experience difficulty in getting into the site if too many people are trying to access it at the same time.

Complete and print the "Avis de Depot" page of the application to be handed in with the attachments required in your application. Official transcripts are required when applying to all competitions. Should you be applying to more than one competition, make sure you get a copy for each competition. These may be obtained at the Student Service Center LB 185 for Concordia studies. If you studied at other universities, official transcripts must also be requested from their Registrar's Office. You should collect all your transcripts and attach them to your "Avis de Depot" page.

Print two copies of the reference form and give them to your referees for completion. They must be returned to you in sealed envelopes before the deadline date. These must also be attached to your "Avis de Depot" page.

Photocopy your medicare card, for those who are Permanent Residents a copy of your IMM 1000 (landing papers) is also required, and attach it (them) to your "Avis de Depot" page.

For students presently registered at Concordia you must:

- a) transmit your application via the web by October 7th and
- b) bring your "Avis de Depot" form and all supporting documentation to the Graduate Awards Office 2135 Mackay 2nd floor no later than 5:00 p.m. October 7th.

Announcements of winners by FCAR is April of the following year.

#### SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES RESEARCH COUNCIL (SSHRC) DOCTORAL COMPETITION

Application forms and guides are available on the web at <http://www.sshrc.ca>. Please read and follow the instructions carefully. These fellowships are open to Canadians and Permanent Residents of Canada. The deadline date for application for students currently registered at Concordia is Monday October 25th to your department. Append a copy of all university transcripts to your application. Unofficial copies issued by the Office of the Registrar will be accepted. Certified copies of previous studies done outside Canada are acceptable. The Graduate Awards Office will certify these copies. You must bring the original in to the Awards office for

processing.

We strongly encourage you to complete the form on line. The form must be printed once completed and handed in to your department.

**Description of Program of Work:** For those completing a master's degree or in the early stages of a doctoral program: clearly state your current level of graduate studies; give the title and a brief description of your master's thesis; identify the field of concentration or subject of your proposed doctoral studies and describe your special interests in this area; to the extent possible describe the program of doctoral study you plan to pursue during the period for which support is requested. Include in your description: i) the name of the university you will attend and a justification of your choice of university (provide the name of your supervisor of doctoral studies, if known); ii) a list of the courses you plan to take and an explanation of how these courses relate to the subject of your proposed doctoral studies; iii) if known, a brief outline of the subject of your thesis.

For those approaching or already engaged in doctoral thesis research: clearly state your current level of graduate studies, outline your thesis and explain how it will build on existing research and contribute to the advancement of knowledge. Ensure that all citations are clear and complete to allow reviewers to locate the source easily. Indicate what stage you are at in your thesis; describe what you hope to accomplish during the period of tenure and what will remain to be done. Provide the name of your supervisor.

**Part B- Letters of Appraisal :** Make two copies of the form, type your name and address where indicate as well as the deadline date by which you want the form returned to you. Give a copy of the form to each of your referees along with a return envelope marked URGENT. Provide your referees with a copy of your Description of Program of Work so that they may refer to it within the letter of appraisal. Referees are to return the completed forms in sealed envelopes to the applicant. The applicant is not permitted to open these envelopes.

The applicant is to submit the completed signed application form, copies of all university transcripts, the two sealed envelopes containing the Letters of Appraisal, and form Part C - Departmental Appraisal and if applicable Part D Joint Program Appraisal form(s), and any other supporting documents to your department by October 25th.

Departments will complete the Appraisal Form and forward the complete applications to the Graduate Awards Office by November 5th. The School of Graduate Studies will convene the internal SSHRC Committee to review and rank applications as per guidelines provided by the Council. Applicants will be notified if their application has been retained to be forwarded to SSHRC for the national competition or if their application was not retained at the University level. This process will be completed by mid January of 2000. Announcements of winners by SSHRC will be made in April 2000.

## **DEPARTMENT NEWS**

Norm Ravvin (pronounced like the bird) has been named the Chair in Quebec and Canadian Jewish Studies, and head of the Institute for Canadian Jewish Studies. He joins our department this fall, after having been a teacher of literature and creative writing at the University of Toronto and the University of New Brunswick. Norm is a critic, fiction writer, and journalist. His essays on Canadian and American Jewish literature are collected in A House of Words:

Jewish Writing, Identity and Memory. He is also the author of a novel, Café des Westerns; a story collection, Sex, Skyscrapers, and Standard Yiddish; and a collection of travel essays called Hidden Canada: An Intimate Travelogue. Norm's recent scholarly research has focused on Malcolm Lowry's fiction and the landscape of British Columbia; the impact of Jewish thought on the ethical philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas; the role of Bruno Schulz in Salman Rushdie's The Moor's Last Sigh; and apocalyptic narratives in the work of Timothy Findley and Saul Bellow.

Michel Despland has just returned from a year's sabbatical leave, during which he pursued work on his research project concerning conflicting views of sacrifice in France in the period from 1520 to 1890. He had two books appear in the course of this last year, Les hiérarchies sont ébranlées. Politiques et théologies au XIXe siècle (Montreal: Fides, 1998) and Les sciences religieuses sous la Monarchie de Juillet (Paris: Editions l'Harmattan, 1999). Professor T.S. Rukmani had a period of leave in the winter term of 1999. During this time, she interviewed 30 sannyasin-s in India belonging to different orders and sects as part of her field work for a project on Sannyasin-s and the Sannyasasrama in the Hindu Tradition. She has also been busy with the final proof reading of her two volume work on the Yogasutrabhasyasavivarana, which will appear by the end of this year, and she has finalized the proofs of the book on the Hindu Diaspora: Global Perspectives, which should be out within the next month or so.

This year, Norma Joseph is on sabbatical leave; she has been appointed as Visiting Scholar at the International Research Institute on Jewish Women at Brandeis University. During her sabbatical, she will be exploring contemporary Jewish law as it attends to issues of gender and change. Ira Robinson will be on a half-year sabbatical leave, starting in January, during which he will be pursuing his research on North American Orthodox Judaism in the early twentieth century.

Maria Mamfredis, one of our Ph.D. students, has been appointed to a full-time LTA (limited term appointment) position in the Department, and will be teaching courses in the area of Judaism. A number of our other graduate students, and graduates—Marlene Bonneau, Deidre Butler, Savithri de Turreil, May Hale, Marc Lalonde, Laurie Nixon, Susan Palmer, Johanne Rabbat, Sandra Walker-Ramisch, and Sonia Zylberberg—are acting as part-time teachers this year, teaching courses in a variety of different areas.

As of June 1, Leslie Orr became Department Chair. Michael Oppenheim has taken over from Norma Joseph as Graduate Program Director for the Judaic Studies M.A. program, and is sharing this responsibility for the History and Philosophy of Religion M.A. program with Michel Despland. Michael is responsible for H&P students whose last names begin with the letters A through I, while Michel advises the J through Z students. Fred Bird will continue as the Graduate Program Director for the Ph.D. program.

## **GRADUATE STUDENT ACTIVITIES**

### **GRADUATIONS**

At the 1999 fall convocation, M.A. degrees in the History and Philosophy of Religion will be awarded to Howard Gontovnick, Christopher Helland, Elizabeth Lamont, and Tarek Toni; Charles Lévy will receive an M.A. in Judaic Studies. Chris Helland's thesis was on "Science and the Sacred: New Technologies within New Religions—A Reaction to Secularization and a

Reinterpretation of Myth” and the thesis of Charles Lévy was entitled “De la rédemption au messianisme: Circonscription du thème de la rédemption en explorant la nécessité du rôle de l’humain dans la perspective messianique maïmonidienne.” We also have a graduating Ph.D. student, Margaret Million, whose dissertation is entitled “Changing Forms of Parish Renewal: Toward a Restructuring of the Parochial Model, 1950-1999.”

#### NEW GRADUATE STUDENTS

A number of new students are joining us this fall. They include: Patricia Aldred (H&P), Sylvie Babarik (H&P), John Bilodeau (H&P), Angela Bourque (Ph.D.), Isabelle Lamoureux (H&P), Susan Landau-Chark (Ph.D.), Celine Leduc (H&P), Dalia Lubell (Jd.St.), Charles Lévy (Ph.D.), Frank Mewes (H&P), Farzaneh Peterson (H&P), Mayjee Philip (Ph.D.), Chantal Rainville (H&P), Deena Roskies (Jd.St.), Tanuja Saha-Pym (H&P), and Claudia Weijers (H&P).

The JOURNAL OF RELIGION AND CULTURE is a Canadian graduate student journal which is published by the grad students of the Religion Department at Concordia. The Journal accepts papers and book reviews by Canadian graduate students within the broad area of the study of Religion and Culture. This year, the Journal’s Editors are Deidre Butler and Rose Ftaya. Deidre has been Editor for the past 3 volumes. Rose joins her this year as Co-Editor. Sonia Zylberberg, who has been the co-Editor for the last 2 volumes, is the Book Review Editor this year. Nathalie Pilon has been working on the Journal since last Spring and is an Associate Editor this year. New faces include Benjamin Lefebvre and Mary Hale who will be joining the editorial team. The deadline for paper submission is in the Spring of each year, always after the Conference.

Journal submissions: We receive the papers and do a preliminary review of which should be considered for publication. We then ask professors to review the papers. (This means that the Journal is a refereed journal, which is an important distinction when you are applying for fellowships.) The professors return the papers and note whether the paper is ok as is, needs revisions, or is not accepted. If revisions are needed, we advise the author who then has the choice of making the revisions or not. If they make the revisions, the paper is accepted. If the author chooses not to make the revisions the paper isn’t published. The Journal never makes any changes to an author’s paper without consent. Authors retain copyright of their papers and may publish elsewhere as long as the Journal is credited as having published the paper originally. If you are interested in submitting a paper, contact one of the editors for submission guidelines. The Journal often has more submissions than it can accept, so remember that papers presented at the Conference get priority and present your paper at the Conference!

This year will be the 5th annual GRADUATE STUDENT CONFERENCE FOR THE INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDY OF RELIGION AND CULTURE. The conference is a wonderful opportunity for grad students to present their research to fellow students, faculty and the Montreal community. While we don’t have a final date for the conference at this time, our plan is to hold it at the Canadian Jewish Congress Building (which is now occupied by Concordia) in late April. A Call for Papers will go out in late September/early October. Last year’s conference received an enormous number of papers from students from Montreal and across Canada. Many people thought that there were too many papers presented, so we may cut the number of papers or make the conference a two day event. Because of the conference’s growth



it's more important than ever to meet the Call for Papers deadline! The call will go out in email to Religion department grad students, posted around Montreal universities, and will be mailed to Universities across Canada. If you want to Chair a panel or work on the conference, contact Deidre. Working on the conference this year are: Deidre Butler, Rose Ftaya, Nathalie Pilon and Mary Hale. We still need volunteers for this year!

How does the Conference and Journal work? The Conference started as an offshoot of a course assignment given in Rosemary Hale's Vox Femini course in 1996. At that time, Bill Thomas was the Editor of the Journal and brought together a team to start the first conference (Johanne Rabbat, Marlene Bonneau, James Jervis and Deidre Butler). Papers from this first conference were published in a supplementary volume of the Journal of Religion and Culture. When Bill left the department the following year, he passed the Editor's job to Deidre. Since then, the Journal has given priority to publish papers presented at the annual conference. Since the funding for the conference is arranged through the Journal, and the Journal publishes papers from the conference, it has made sense to have one person coordinate both projects and have signing authority for both. Mary Hale has graciously agreed to take over Deidre Butler's job of central Journal Editor and Conference Coordinator for 2000-2001. The coordinator is responsible for funding, keeping both projects on course and working with a team for each project. Working on these projects has always been on a volunteer basis. Any graduate student working in the area of Religion and Culture can work on either the Conference or the Journal. The only limitation is that the person who coordinates both projects must be a Religion dept grad student. The reason for this is to keep both projects within the department and to facilitate funding. Laurel Fischtein will continue her great work this year as Conference and Journal fund raiser. If you know of funding opportunities, contact Laurel or Deidre.

For more info about the Conference or Journal -talk to one of the people involved or email Deidre at [Deidre@inforoute.net](mailto:Deidre@inforoute.net)

News from the President of THE GRADUATE RELIGION STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION,  
Johanne Rabbat <[sgtjo@hotmail.com](mailto:sgtjo@hotmail.com)>

The first piece of news is that the Graduate Religion Students' Association helped support the last Graduate Student Conference (and the Journal of Religion and Culture) as we have every year since our inception. Last semester, Maria and I picked up some hanging plants for the office as a gift to Tina and Munit for the constant help and support that they provide to Grad. students throughout the semester! They've helped spruce up the place a bit and it looks great with the new paint job! Marlene, Chris, Maria and myself also helped to put back and re-organize the books in the Conference Room between the two annexes after the paint job. They have since been taken out again b/c of the installation of the new carpet!

As President of the Association, I notified the GSA about the problem that Grad. Students encounter with the Graduate Agenda or daily planner every year. It comes out WAY too late for any of us to benefit from it and, since it is included in our fees, it should be made available before the end of the Fall Semester which is what has been happening for the past couple of years. Tina said that by the time they come in, nobody wants them anymore. By that time, most Grad. Students have already purchased their own despite the fact that they are included in our fees. No one from the GSA has responded to me yet as to whether or not the agenda will be delivered on

time this year!

You might want to say a word about the restructuring of Grad. Student fees as well, and the concern over the past year regarding TAs' rights and duties, as well as the new CUPFA agreement that affects openings for Grad. Students to teach courses.

Maybe a word could also be said about Howard's electronic newsletter as well. Students not on the mailing list might want to contact him if they wish to receive it. To subscribe, contact Howard Gontovnick at [howardg@cam.org](mailto:howardg@cam.org)

## OTHER ACTIVITIES OF GRADUATE STUDENTS

What follows consists entirely of reports that you have made about yourselves. Many of these were submitted to me (Leslie) by e-mail ([orr@vax2.concordia.ca](mailto:orr@vax2.concordia.ca)). If you don't find yourself below, or if you want to elaborate on or update what you see about yourself below, please get in touch with me, so that your report of your activities can go into the next newsletter, to appear in the spring. You can, of course, submit hard copy, as well as e-copy.

Louis R. Chauvin (Ph.D.): The only thing that has changed from my end of the tunnel that you may want to mention is my participation in a weekly column on Business Ethics in the Montreal Gazette.

Christina D'Agostino (H&P): What was to be a quiet summer turned into the experience of a lifetime. For two weeks in July I returned to Italy to see and spend time with relatives. Being that I was trapped in small villages with little to do, a local priest (knowing I study religion) offered me the chance to spend a week in a local convent. I jumped at the chance and learned things that no text book could have ever taught me. My days were filled with studying, prayer and solitude which suited me just fine. The experience was humbling and opened my eyes to false stereotypes I once believed to be true. My week in total isolation from the world was serene and peaceful and I hope to repeat the experience next summer.

Russ Daye (Ph.D.): I spent six weeks on the East coast this summer, first working as a volunteer in the Nova Scotia election and then camping, hiking, biking, etc. with Fiona in Highlands National Park (Cape Breton), Kejimakujic National Park (Nova Scotia), and Acadia National Park (Maine). This fall will be spent studying for and writing two comps (Buddhism and Christian Social Ethics) and preparing for four months of research time in South Africa this winter.

Catherine Grimanis (H&P) is up to the usual stuff: still teaching English and history at Kells Academy but this year taking on some administrative work as well. Once again, I have been invited to give a talk on women in Eastern Orthodoxy at The Sign of the Theotokos Orthodox Church and I am continuing my studies at Concordia.

Mary Hale (H&P) reported in the spring: Married, One child-Zoe, 10 months and of course amazingly beautiful and brilliant. I commute from Ottawa, so the year hasn't been a picnic-but I've enjoyed the challenge. Working on my thesis topic, broadly and grandly conceived as the history of messianic thought. Topic still subject to change. Hoping to re-work a paper to submit for presentation at AAR. Doing a joint presentation on eco-feminism at the Graduate conference with my husband, Blake Wright. Going to California this summer and hoping to take advantage of the theological library at Claremont School of Theology and to ride some waves.

Carlton F. Harvey (Ph.D.): In early June at the District Assembly of the Churches of the Nazarene of Quebec I received another two year appointment as district superintendent. In July I attended an international conference for young people ages 15-22 sponsored by the Church of the Nazarene. Over 9,000 teenagers attended the gathering at the Air Canada Centre in Toronto. I was invited to attend as an observer representing the Nazarene Churches in Canada. August found me in Ontario at a church camp as the principle speaker for a 10 day event. Academically, I have now completed all course work and comprehensives. I am well underway on research and the development of my project for my thesis on organizational renewal in religious organizations. In the fall I will be spending time doing a field study of two districts in the Church of the Nazarene, one in Ontario and the other in the State of Oregon, U.S.A. Best wishes to Dr. Orr as she takes up her responsibilities as head of the department. And good luck to all as we launch into the fall academic season.

Steven Lapidus (H&P) I have one more comp to write, which I'll be writing very soon (over the next few weeks), then finish up my thesis, and hopefully defend everything successfully. In the meantime, I am still giving the occasional tour at the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre. As well, I am collaborating on the editing for the purposes of publication of the proceedings of a conference held in Ottawa on Holocaust and Memory.

Galina Novgorodsteva (Jd.St.): I passed the first comprehensive exam--Judaism in the Late Antiquity. Some of you witnessed the last act of drama at the office, when my computer in the middle of the business became dead. Now I am braving the guided research on *Sarah and Hagar* in Midrash and Pictorial Tradition. During the summer I lectured in Russian community on the subject *Judaism and Art: The Architecture of the Ancient Synagogues and Jewish Artists and Russian Avant-gard*. The new school year I celebrate with the first (in my Canadian life) lecture in English at synagogue Shar HaShamaim on Ancient synagogues. I am pretty scared.

Sandra Walker-Ramisch (Ph.D.): What can I tell you, my life is really very unexceptional. Except for my kids..I have 4 (two are step-kids, but mine nonetheless). One just got a Phd from East Anglia (England); one an MA from Oxford, now in law school at U of T, one an MA from Canterbury (England), and the fourth (who has no university degrees, and was smart enough to train in computers), and the mother of my granddaughter, Clover, just landed herself a terrific (and extremely lucrative) job in computer multi-media stuff, and bought her own house. Clover and Hilary have been living with us for a year now (following the breakup of her marriage) and we will very much miss them when they move out in July. Me? Making a last sprint this summer to finish thesis. I am caught between the push to finish a PhD and retirement plans. My motivation and energy bounces between the two. Joe, my husband, (Carleton Prof in religious studies for 30 years) retires in 5 years and so major changes cannot be avoided. -- Plans beyond PhD? not a career - I think that has passed me by. But I have had such a positive experience with the Death and Dying course, I am mulling a text book around in my head. I have not found anything out there which entirely satisfies my needs and preferences. Also, having taught the New Testament (literature of Early Christianity) for many years at both Concordia and Carleton, I want to put a text out which recognizes feminist work in the area in something other than a 1 paragraph addendum! No more "women in" titles. Then there is the mystery novel..... Of course, all this depends on winning the lottery!